

2014-15 ITEMIZER-OBSERVER ALL-REGION PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM



GUARD
Kylie Nash
Central

The 5-foot-6 guard played a pivotal role in Central's offensive success. Nash led the Panthers in scoring, averaging 16 points per game, while shooting 52 percent from the field. Nash wasn't just a scoring threat for Central. The junior also averaged four rebounds, three steals and three assists per game, while shooting 38 percent from beyond the 3-point line as Nash developed into one of the Panthers' top overall threats this season. Nash earned first team all-Mid-Willamette Conference honors for her efforts this season and helped her team reach the first round of the Class 5A state playoffs after a strong season. "Kylie is a fierce competitor and a student of the game," Central coach Julie McDonald said. "She is always pushing herself to give 100 percent every day."



GUARD
Cheyenne Locke
Perrydale

The 5-foot-4 senior guard was Perrydale's workhorse during the 2014-15 season. The four-year varsity starter helped the Pirates to a 12-11 record overall in their first year in Class 2A. Locke led Perrydale in scoring, including scoring a game-high 24 points during a 60-56 overtime victory over Monroe on Jan. 3. Locke earned second team all-Tri-River Conference honors for her performance this season. She averaged 12 points, six assists and three steals per game during

her senior campaign and had the ability to succeed at any level of high school basketball. "Cheyenne took second team all-league in a very, very good conference," Perrydale coach Terry Newton said. "She could play for any team in the state. In the (Class 1A level), she's probably battling for player of the year not only in our league, but in the state."



FORWARD
Sai Tapasa
Central

The 6-foot-1 post missed the entire 2013-14 season after tearing her left anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in addition to tears in her medial collateral ligament (MCL) and posterior cruciate ligament (PCL). The senior came back with a vengeance for her final season with the Panthers. Tapasa averaged nine points per game, while shooting 40 percent from the field. She also averaged 6.5 rebounds and two steals per contest, while giving Central a critical inside presence on offense and defense and a dependable rebounder on both ends of the floor. Tapasa earned all-league honorable mention after helping Central reach the first round



Tapasa

of the Class 5A state playoffs against Crater.



GUARD
Sarah Zwicker
Dallas

The 5-foot-8 guard made a significant mark for the Dragons as a freshman. Now a year stronger and wiser, Zwicker continued to play a pivotal role in Dallas' offense. Zwicker was one of the Dragons' top all-around threats, including scoring a game-high 19 points during a 62-31 win over rival Central. Zwicker averaged a team-high 11.2 points and 1.6 steals per game during the season. Zwicker was more than just an outside shooting threat, however. She also played an integral role on an aggressive defense, as well as turning defensive stops into quick baskets on offense. With the Dragons losing five seniors to graduation, Zwicker's importance to Dallas' offense will only grow during her junior year.

FORWARD
Telaney Newton
Perrydale

The 5-foot-11 junior forward wasn't Perrydale's flashiest player, but New-



Newton

ton was perhaps the team's most consistent in big moments. Newton averaged 10 points, seven rebounds and two assists per game. Beyond her stats, the third team all-Tri-River Conference selection played her best basketball in the Pirates' biggest games, something that not every player can do. That ability to rise to the occasion made Newton stand out and become one of the Pirates' leaders during the last few minutes of games. "She's a versatile player," Perrydale coach Terry Newton said. "She always played well in the big games. That's how I judge players. When you score 20 points against a bad team, that's not going to excite me. When you score against top competition and you're playing well when the moment matters, that's what I am looking for and that's what made her so valuable to our team this season."

COACH
Micke Kidd
Falls City

Falls City entered the 2014-15 season

with just seven girls on its roster, including two freshmen. But Kidd helped guide the Mountaineers to a historic season, culminating with the school's first ever trip to the Class 1A state playoffs.



Kidd

After starting the year 2-10, Falls City ended the season 8-3, good for second place in the Casco League after the regular season. The Mountaineers shook off a loss in the first round of the League playoffs to secure their bid to the state playoffs, thanks to strong performances from first team all-Casco League selection Allison Kidd and second team picks Brittany Varney and Tierra Reynolds. Falls City may have lost in the first round of the state playoffs, but the season was already a huge success. Thanks in part to Kidd's guidance throughout the season, the Mountaineers made school history and laid a foundation for future success for the returning and incoming players. And that's something Kidd hopes this season was not the exception to the rule, but the start of something special for not only the girls basketball program, but all of Falls City's sports.

The 2014-15 Itemizer-Observer all-region girls basketball team was selected by Sports Editor Lukas Eggen, along with heavy input from area coaches.

Driven: Nash looking for even bigger season

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"I have been playing since I can remember," Nash said. "It all started with me participating in my older brother's practices and eventually even playing on a tournament team with him and other older guys. My brother loved it, and my competitive nature and love for the adrenaline and the physicality of the sport got me hooked immediately."

Nash's older brother Trevor, a senior at Blanchet Catholic High in Salem, helped drive Nash to become the player she is today. "We are both extremely competitive and that has allowed us to push each other in every aspect of life. I will be forever grateful for all he has done for me," Nash said. "My brother and I talk about the sport a lot and always share a new move we learned or a cool play we remember from our games. We practice a lot together at an outdoor court close to our house."

As point guard, it was Nash's responsibility to not only score, but ensure the offense ran smoothly.

There was added pressure in helping Central's first year in Class 5A be a successful one.

Nash didn't shy away from the expectations placed upon her.

"My individual goals were to increase all the areas of my stats and help lead my team to have a great first year at the 5A level," Nash said.

She responded with her best statistical season yet.

In addition to leading the team in scoring and shooting percentage, Nash averaged four rebounds, three steals and three assists per game.

On offense, she not only drove and dished out to teammates; she worked on her 3-point shot, shooting 38 percent from beyond the arc.

"Offensively, Kylie has always been able to see the floor well and take the ball to the basket," Central coach Julie McDonald said. "Last summer, she worked on developing her long-range shot, and she ended up leading our team in field goal percentage."

Not all of Nash's contributions showed up on the stat sheet, but were momentum plays that helped change the course of a game.

"Defensively, she isn't afraid to take a charge," McDonald said. "She can anticipate the next pass for a steal



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central junior Kylie Nash led the Panthers in scoring, averaging 16 points per game.

and overall she understands both sides of the game."

As a team, the Panthers

finished 14-11 overall and 8-6 in Mid-Willamette Conference play. Central advanced

to the first round of the Class 5A state playoffs before falling to Crater 56-33

on March 7.

"The key to my success is putting in work every chance I get," Nash said. "I play year-round and know the importance of putting 100 percent into everything, whether it's conditioning, shooting or simply throwing a pass. You can always expect me to give it my best."

As Nash had a breakout season on the court, basketball has also helped her off it as well.

"This sport has allowed me to use my work ethic to thrive in something I love and that plays to my strengths as a person," Nash said. "It has also allowed me to learn the importance of practice, prioritizing my time as a student athlete and has shaped my goals for the future."

Nash's 2014-15 season may have been her best yet, but she's not settling on past accomplishments. She's hoping to show everyone that her junior year is just the tip of the iceberg for her and her team's potential.

"Next year, I again hope to increase my stats in every aspect of my game and grow as a leader for my team and hopefully be able to take (Central) deeper than we were able to this year," Nash said.

WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

Men's basketball falls in NCAA tournament

Wolves' late rally comes up just short against top-seeded Azusa Pacific



WOU ATHLETICS/for the Itemizer-Observer

Western Oregon senior Lewis Thomas goes up for a jump ball against Azusa Pacific on Friday night.

Itemizer-Observer staff report

AZUSA, Calif. — The Western Oregon men's basketball team saw its historic season come to an end on Friday.

The Wolves lost to top-seeded Azusa Pacific 75-67 in the first round of the NCAA Division II West Regional.

WOU nearly pulled off a miracle comeback against the Cougars.

Trailing 65-52 with 2:29 left in the game, the Wolves connected on five-straight 3-pointers to pull within 71-67 with 26 seconds remaining.

Four Azusa Pacific free throws iced the victory, however.

Junior Andy Avgi scored 19 points to lead WOU, while Julian Nichols and Lewis Thomas added 14 and

10 points, respectively.

Western Oregon (23-7 overall) finished with its most wins since the 1982-83 campaign, when the Wolves went 26-6.

"First of all, I want to say that I'm extremely proud of our group as we have a group of kids that is a special unit and really has bought into everything that the team is about," WOU coach Brady Bergeson said. "I am extremely proud of them. They have helped us get to places that we have never been in school history before, and they have a lot to be proud of this year."

SULTESSA EARNS ALL-AMERICAN HONORS: Western Oregon junior Badane Sultessa earned All-American honors at the NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field Championships on Saturday. Sultessa placed fourth in the men's 800-meter



Sultessa

run final, finishing in 1 minute, 51.36 seconds. Junior Stephanie Stuckey finished ninth in the women's 1,600 final in 5:00.85. The WOU track and field team took home three individual titles at the Saint's Open hosted by Mt. Hood Community College Saturday in Gresham. Junior Zach Holloway won the men's steeple chase in 9:32.71, while junior Josh Hanna took first in the men's 800-meter run in 1:54.14. Junior Emmi Collier placed first in the women's shot put with a throw of 42 feet, 11¾ inches. WOU will compete at the Rose City Preview Saturday in Portland.

SOFTBALL SPLITS: The Western Oregon softball team

split a pair of extra-inning thrillers against Simon Fraser on Saturday. The Clan scored three runs in the top of the 10th inning to win the first game 5-3. The Wolves (10-12 overall, 5-1 Great Northwest Athletic Conference) won the second game 6-5 (eight innings) thanks to a walk-off single by pitcher Jordan Williams. Sophomore Kelsie Garner went 5 for 10 with a double and four runs scored during the games. WOU's scheduled doubleheader against Central Washington on Sunday was postponed until April 2 at 2 p.m. The Wolves face the Wildcats in Ellensburg, Wash., for a doubleheader Sunday at noon.



Williams